SONGS OF YOUTH

PATRICK O'CONNOR

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SONGS OF YOUTH

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By

PATRICK O'CONNOR

Third Printing

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TO THE CHILD JESUS,

as the Wise Men found Him,

WITH MARY HIS MOTHER

Verse contributed to *The Far East*, *Pagan Missions*, *The Ave Maria* and *The Irish Monthly*, is reprinted here with acknowledgments to these magazines.

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SONGS OF YOUTH

THE MANTLE OF MARY

FAIR is the hue of your mantle, Mary—
(Take me to shelter, take me to hide!)
From the deep skies of Heaven it drank all its color,
In the deep pools of Heaven my mantle was dyed.

Fine is the cloth of your mantle, Mary—
(Take me to shelter, take me to hide!)
Ah, careful was the carding and careful the spinning,
And piteous the shearing of my dear Lamb's side.

Warm is the web of your mantle, Mary—
(Take me to shelter, take me to hide!)
It is woven of rare wool, woven of fair wool—
The soft white fleece of my Lamb Who died.

Draped like a queen's is your mantle, Mary—
(Take me to shelter, take me to hide!)
Yea, God hath exalted His handmaid, Who made me
Mother of His Word and His Spirit's bride.

Full are the folds of your mantle, Mary—
(Take me to shelter, take me to hide!)
That all generations be shielded and succored,
The cloak of their Mother is a deep cloak and wide.

Ah, wrap me around with your mantle, Mary—
(Take me to shelter, take me to hide!)
Child of my sword-pierced soul, I shall guard you,
Little blood-brother of the Crucified.

THE SPLENDID CAUSE

WHO has a blade for a splendid cause,
Who has a heart that's true,
To live and fight for the grandest thing
That man could dream, or singer sing,
Or ever soldier knew?

Who would go forth on toilsome ways
By saints and heroes trod,
And join with a gallant company
In a glorious, deathless chivalry—
The chivalry of God?

The cry of the men of the old Crusades,
Hear ye its echoes roll?
The *Deus Vult* of an armèd throng
Rings out, as a knightly battle-song,
To rouse a knightly soul.

A trumpet sounds in the far, far hills—
'Twere shame to answer "No",
But show the world ye are unafraid,
As Louis was, in the old Crusade,
To take the Cross, and go!

The Captain calls to a high emprize;
Pray that He chooseth you
To work, to wield, to win for Him—
There's half of the world to win for Him—
Fine deed of derring-do.

For this is the dream that the old men dreamt,
  The vision the young men see—
To march in the glory of Pentecost,
To bear to the nations the sweet white Host
  And the truth to make them free.

Then let not the knightly slogan die,
  Nor the knightly weapons fall,
Till every land is His Holy Land,
Where His Lamp is lit and His altars stand
  And His Cross is over all.

So flash out your blades for the splendid cause
  And pray that your hearts be true,
To live and fight for the grandest thing
That man could dream, or singer sing,
  Or ever soldier knew!

A PRAYER OF YOUTH

MAKE of our youth, O God, a holy thing,
Let it not languish, die and naught avail;
Tend it, we pray Thee, in its blossoming,
Give it the beauty that can never fail.

Let us not pass in dreams of fantasy
The rich young morning, heeding not Thy call;
Then, at cold dusk, to waken suddenly
And, terror-stricken, watch the swift night fall.

Thou Who didst give our manhood dignity,
Set our young hearts with ardor all aflame;
Make us true soldiers of Thy chivalry,
Loving Thy hallowed Standard and Thy Name.

Let us not waste Thy splendid gift, O King,
Or barter it for all the world's poor price;
Make of our youth, O God, a holy thing,
Make of our hearts, O Lord, Thy sacrifice.

WHEN I RODE OUT TO DALGAN

WHEN I rode out to Dalgan,
The stars were in the sky:
And past the trees the lights spoke out
Where Dalgan's windows lie;
It stirred my heart to see them,
As through the dusk they showed—
This sacred thing God's hand had writ
Beside a Connacht road.

They bound my hands in Dalgan,
In white my hands were bound,
The stately words were said—I touched
Smooth cup and paten round;
Vested I stood in Dalgan—
From that anointed hour
There trembles on these miraculous lips
God's swift eternal power.

With barren, chrismless hands we come,
We go the priestly way;
Whom Dalgan calls it may not keep;
So, on a summer's day,
I turned and rode from Dalgan,
Yet bore with me a part—
The lights of Dalgan burning
Within a rover's heart.

I know not how the end may come,
  Nor what may lie between;
And I may never walk again
  Where Dalgan woods are green.
But Dalgan calls to Dalgan
  And they will come who'll say:
"He was of us whose grave we find,
  We stand on Dalgan clay."

When I rode out from Dalgan,
  The sun was high at noon:
The fields were deep in Dalgan,
  That wistful day in June.
I thought how God hath said it—
  That those who, weeping, sow,
Shall bear their sheaves in gladness
  When they will reaping go.

THE FOLLOWING OF THE STAR

AS INTO the skies of Melchior,
Gaspar and Balthasar,
Into the life of every man
There flashes forth a star.

It shone in the eyes of a people,
It stood in a nation's ken,
But the only fools that followed it
Were three Wise Men.

And they rode with the hearts of children
Till to the walls they came—
First of the Christ's Crusaders—
To the walls of Jerusalem.

And half-roused sleepers wondered,
And village dogs would bark
To hear the Wise Men's caravan
Go blundering through the dark.

But never a doubt in Melchior,
In Gaspar or Balthasar:
The ways were wild, but they heeded not,
For their eyes were on the star.

And they went with their treasure of frankincense,
They went with their myrrh and gold,
While over the feasts of their jesting kin
The mad thing was told.

Yet deeper they plunged in folly,
And heaven and earth seemed lost,
But there marched, unseen, beside them,
God's flame-winged battle-host.

And they found their peace and their healing
As they knelt in the stable bare;
And the day would come when their kin in the East
Would curse that they were not there.

As into the skies of Melchior,
Gaspar and Balthasar,
Into the lives of you and me
There flashes forth a star.

JOINING UP

SO THEN it's good-night and good-bye and the last shake-hands,
Good-night—good luck—good-bye: and then my mind
Tries to believe it all, scarce understands
That alone I go, leaving them all behind:

The men that I lived with, talked with, many a day,
The men whose faces, voices, hearts I knew;
Tonight have I cast old fellowship away,
For at last the hour whose coming I feared is due.

So then it's good-bye to them all, though as before
In the old places they will still appear:
But their faces' glow in the lamplight I'll watch no more,
The well-known notes of their voices no more hear.

Is it not hard, dear Lord, that it should be so?
Aye, it is hard: but You Yourself have known
A heavier grief, a far more poignant woe—
Going apart and suffering all alone

The pitiless scourge, the thorn, the driven nail;
And while Your life was broken and sacrificed
For men, You saw the men You loved to fail—
Where is there woe like Yours, O lonely Christ?

Oh, desolate, anguished Christ, it is not fair
That we should not sow where You have so freely sown.
In the regal fruit of Your Passion we richly share—
Shall we take of Your sufferings, Lord, and bar our own?

So what of it, then, if we say good-night and good-bye?
Harder was felt and done, harder was said—
And who knows but that Christ, going lonely and broken to die,
Looked forth to this night, and to us, and was comforted?

HERO-WORSHIP

I KNOW of a princely Hero
Who has set my heart aflame:
I cherish the thought of His glory,
And love the sound of His Name.

Pure and splendidly winning,
He casts a wondrous spell,
And the lure of His perfect goodness
Is a thing no tongue can tell.

He comes of a royal lineage—
There is none so royal as He—
And thronged with His battle-legions
Are the fields of eternity.

He is mightier than the mighty,
He hath lit the blazing stars,
He cages the wrath of the tempest
Within His will's strong bars.

Yet tender is He, and child-like,
No gentle grace He lacks;
He would not break the bruisèd reed,
Nor quench the smoking flax.

He hath seen the grief of my sickness,
And my burden of poverty,
And hath leaped from the throne of His Kingdom
To offer Himself for me.

He hath borne the weight of my sorrow,
He hath made Him lowly and poor;
He hath prayed and toiled and suffered,
To make my peace secure.

And He went from the hearth of His Mother,
To die upon a tree,
For me and for mine, who are dust and clay—
And yet a King was He.

And when His deeds were counted
This did the people tell:
"He spoke as no man ever spoke,"
And "He hath done all things well."

Oh, I thought I could serve Him blindly,
Could watch like a dog at His door,
Aye, front the blaze of a thousand swords,
So He be honored more.

But the days came when I struck Him,
And wounded Him bloodily—
Ah, Christ! You are goodness infinite,
For still You bore with me.

Oh, He is my Hero of heroes,
Whom I worship and confess,
From the earthy depths of my weakness,
From the slough of my sinfulness.

Pure-souled, generous, kingly,
Splendidly winning is He,
With the lure of His perfect goodness,
With His grand Divinity.

THE MUSTERING

POST it in the club-rooms, cry it through the mart,
Wherever there's a young man eating out his heart,
Wherever souls are stirring in a boy's wild dream,
Tell how down from east and west the Christ's White Riders stream;
Wherever there's a young hand closing on a sword,
Whisper it that the Hour has come, pass on the tingling word;
Tell of the blazoned standards massed, and the marvelous Mustering,
Tell of the Cause made known at last, and the Trumpet, and the King—
The King divinely lovable, tender and sweet of reign,
He Who is strong and beautiful above the sons of men,
He Who laid down His splendid life our piteous wants to fill,
He Who rose splendid from the tomb and lives and lures us still.
So tell how many a company and winding cavalcade
Gather, while peals through Christendom a mighty fanfaronade,
Gather, while hearts in Aquitaine and olden towns of France
Are anguished with a yearning to have part in the Romance,

In the white Romance of Beauty that shone out on
Thabor's height,
When the flame of Christ's fair Godhead drenched
the mountains with its light.
So men-at-arms and captains tall, the nations' chiv-
alry,
Come crowding down with sword and lance for Christ
of Galilee:
And they fear not pain or wounding, they have
laughed at toil and death,
The grave means naught to such as ride with Him
of Nazareth.
So deep bells are tolling through the breathless hours,
And chimes are richly ringing from the old cathedral
towers,
While tuck of drum and thud of hoof are rhythmic
on the air,
And through the night on farthest hills the beacons
leap and flare;
Clanking fall the hammers as the great smiths swing
and sway,
(A thousand pikes are needed for the men who march
away)
And knights ride in, full-panoplied, to fill the streets
of Rheims,
And down the road from Paris, King Saint Louis'
armor gleams.

There's a great song chanted and a trumpet blown,
There's a challenge from high Christendom to hell
and Satan thrown:
Oh, never in the heart of man has greater dream
had birth,
For Christ rides out from Nazareth to conquer all
the earth!

Aye, shout it in the highways, through court and hall
and house,
And dusty town and lonely farm and sleeping vil-
lage rouse:
Where men are counting tarnished coins, where men
drowse life away,
Oh, fill the sky with clarion notes to make a great
réveil;
Where men are bored and handsome, and dance to
a sickly air,
Oh, open up the painted doors, let in the Trumpeter:
And as the dancers straightened and strode from the
scented room,
The night they heard from Quatre Bras the distant
cannon boom,
So these will listen—stop—grow white—then, heed-
less of low guitar,
Will sally forth with passionate eyes high fixed on
God's far star:
And then will be seen the swaying flags, the seething
of white blades,

And ranks of men innumerable marching to the Crusades,
And dripping torches held on high, casting a lurid light
On faces tense around a Cross that's borne into the night.
Great cheers surging from the close-formed ranks,
And tidings of swift musterings by Don and Danube's banks,
Word of legions gathering fast by Seine and Meuse and Marne,
And white-robed men that sail for Christ from Hy and Lindisfarne:
Lo, the seas are bearing them from Banba of the West,
They will march their way from Normandy, will march their way from Brest,
And many rise in younger lands beyond the setting sun,
Where the new nations answer to the ancient clarion,
Comrades all, brothers all, in Christ's wide chivalry,
And the men of all the ages make one glorious company:
(With them now go eager bands, black-suited, seen of few,
Grouped at the glistening liner's rails, still to the old Cause true:

With Louis and with Lionheart, under the Cross they stand,
Leagued in the ranks of Charlemagne and thundering Hildebrand.)

There's a great trumpet sounding, there's a great song sung,
And in the teeth of Lucifer a Christian gauntlet flung;
And hearts are gay and reckless all, unheeding death and dearth,
For Christ rides out from Nazareth and Christ must hold the earth—
Yea, Christ rides out from Nazareth to conquer all the earth!

WHEN AGE HAS CREPT UPON YOU

WHEN age has crept upon you and you sit,
Lonely, beside your fire, at evening-time,
Mayhap you will recall some olden rime
Of chivalry, that by God's grace had lit

Your youthful heart with eager wish to brave
All things for Christ, urging you forth to press
To high emprize, heroic holiness,
And lose your life, a stainless soul to save.

Then will you marvel wistfully at these
Great longings of your youth to follow Christ,
And wonder sadly that you sacrificed
Vision so fair, for gain or restless ease.

Ah, let it not be so, but now, while gleams
The heart's fine fire, buckle God's armor on
And be His knight—else sit, when youth is gone,
Mourning the beauty of your wasted dreams.

MY PRAYER

MY prayer it is that I have friends
In the streets where the poor of Dublin live,
For hearts have there the kindliness,
The tender grace sad days can give;
And there is seen in faces wan,
In weary eyes, a faith-lit glow,
As in a picture I have seen
Of some calm saint of long ago.

In Dublin town, at the evening-time,
In many an old, high Georgian room,
They will say the hallowed Rosary,
Or in the church's ruby gloom;
And as through thin, worn hands, the beads
Move slowly, slowly round again,
Great were my joy if I but knew
That my poor name was thought of then.

A shield to me and a comfort sweet,
Whatever the road that must be trod,
Would be their warm remembrances,
For these, indeed, are the friends of God;
And men, at the end, will see among
Those to whom Christ a crown will give,
Faces that I have often seen
In the streets where the poor of Dublin live.

THE DAFFODIL

I SAW a dancing daffodil,
Under the old beech tree,
A slender-stemmed fair daffodil,
A golden-crested daffodil,
A-swaying with the wind's sweet will,
In easy grace and glee;
And O! I loved you, daffodil,
Gladdening the heart in me.

Who shaped you, O my daffodil,
Who caused you thus to blow?
Whence comes your laughing lissomness?
Your green-and-golden loveliness?
With all my heart I praise and bless
The God Who made you so,
And gave me light, dear daffodil,
Himself, from you, to know.

From His rich glory, daffodil,
He lent you comely grace;
Through you, as through a glass, we see;
In part and darkly now we see—
What of the joy when we shall be
In vision face to face!
Lord of a world of daffodils,
Speed on that day apace!

OBIIT

DWELL not on dull monotonous woe,
Rather the heights of Heaven see,
Looking beyond our loss, our grief,
To his fine gain, his victory.

Mourn not for him with doleful dirge,
Chant no despondent threnody;
Leave we the music of despair
To such as fear eternity.

But for him sweep the organ keys,
Unto a great, deep-thundering march,
Swelling the rich sonorous notes
As though through some triumphal arch

There passed, with slow and echoing tread,
Moving majestic as the sea,
Full-panoplied, the splendid ranks
Of some unnumbered chivalry,

And he amongst them; while is heard
Trumpeted by the seraphim,
The kingly greeting of the Christ
To these His knights who fought for Him.

And louder swell the organ notes
In glorious surging unison—
A spacious music that will tell
Of good fight fought, fine guerdon won.

So let the great crescendo rise
To crashing close, triumphantly,
Through farthest skies to celebrate
Death swallowed up in victory.

THE MISSIONARIES

THEY have sailed from all the harbors, they have rounded all the capes,
By North and South they sail, by East and West.
They have dared to do the wisest thing, the course the Master shapes,
(Though a voice said "Stay and risk it" in each breast).
But O, they've sailed for far lands, up and down the earth,
With a boy's will, the will of wind and bird;
They're an Outward Bound Division, holding fast their great Commission,
And their sailing orders urge them till the drums of doom are heard.

So they're camping by the Yukon, and they tramp the Niger's banks;
They are paddling down the Yang-tse and the Han;
For they're manning all the outposts, and they're guarding all the flanks,
They're on duty from the Congo to Japan.
With the peace of little chapels they have girdled all the world,
Where their ruby lamps are burning night and day,

And their altar-bells are chiming when the morning light is climbing
O'er the white-peaked Himalayas and the far hills of Cathay.

The soldiers of the empires go their way with steel and shell—
Go to plant a robber standard on the soil;
But these, as Christ's good soldiers, go to fight the spears of hell,
Go to drive the demon-armies from their spoil.
Unarmed they go, not powerless—but trusting in their King,
And strengthened by their brothers' burning prayers;
In the fields of every region they're a laughing, lonely Legion—
Oh, may Mary's mantle shield them, may the grace of God be theirs!

The traders go for treasure that the worm will take by stealth,
And death will come to cheat them of the whole;
But these win prize eternal, seeking out another wealth—
They have guessed the blinding value of a soul.
They are pioneering miners, and they quest the purest gold,
They are merchants gaining naught but pearls unpriced:

So a thousand roads they're breaking, and they're
trekking, trekking, trekking—
O, they'd blaze a trail to anywhere for madden-
ing love of Christ!

So they've sailed from all the harbors and they've
rounded all the capes,
By North and South they sail, by East and West;
They have dared to do the wisest thing, the course
the Master shapes,
(Though a voice said "Stay and risk it" in each
breast).
But O, they've sailed for far lands, up and down
the earth,
For they take their Captain-Comrade at His
Word;
They're His Outward Bound Division, holding fast
a great Commission,
And the world will see their wisdom when the
drums of doom are heard.

FAREWELL

AND now you are going away, away,
And your feet will tread on a lonely road;
But the Grace of Christ will comfort you,
For your shoulders bear His Passion-load.

You have turned your eyes to the East, to the East,
And your backs to the West and the old known faces;
But yours is the joy, by gift of Christ,
Of setting the Cross in the world's far places.

You have fathers no more, mothers no more,
And your hearts of flesh and blood will grieve;
But the tender Christ will be kith and kin
To you who go and to those you leave.

You go from the warmth and the lighted room,
From the kindly hearth and its consolations;
But Christ in the Eucharist blesses you,
For you bear His Bread to the starvèd nations.

And still you are human, poor and weak—
Is there none to help you, stay by your side?
Mary will guard you, going forth
To pain for love of the Crucified.

And the world's a-sneer that men should be
To a thorn-crowned King so blindly true;
But the hearts of the world are restless still,
And their secret envy follows you.

So now you are going away, away,
And your feet will tread on a lonely road:
Christ give us the grace to tread it, too,
And bear for His sake the Passion-load.

OUR LADY OF THE EVENING

I HAVE seen the sky in the evening,
It was luminous and serene,
And I loved it for its beauty,
And I thought of you, my Queen;
And because your soul is lovely,
Unmarred by sin's dark trace,
I call you Queen of the Evening,
My Lady full of grace.

Clear was the sky in the evening,
No sullying stain was there:
'Twould make one in love with purity
To see a sky so fair;
And I thought, O Mary, my Mother,
How pleasing it must be
To God, the Lover of holiness,
Your stainless soul to see.

Our Lady, Queen of the Evening,
Look on our darkening fields,
And pray for each struggling pilgrim soul—
Else to the foe it yields.
Keep us in radiant purity,
For sake of Christ, your Son,
So may our souls in His dear sight
Be fair to look upon.

PAX IN PROELIO

TONIGHT a thousand fears besiege my heart,
A host of fretful thoughts creep to the walls
Of my faint soul—poor fortress. No proud art
Of war is mine. Yet, though the alarum calls,
I laugh in peaceful quiet at each fear,
For know I well that You, dear Christ, are near.

Were I alone, I should not dare to face
One hour of life; a timorous, weakly prey,
I'd fall before the foes that mount apace,
Threatening this crumbling citadel of clay.
But I am not alone. Whate'er may seem,
I know that You are nearer than men dream:

Near me to help and solace, mould and guide,
Near me to love, to heal—aye, to forgive;
Ever, in spite of all, You are beside,
Helping my piteous soul to hope and live.
Comrade Divine, Your goodness shall not cease,
In life and death, to be my salving peace.

I mock you, fierce besiegers of my soul,
Menacing cares and dark anxieties;
Vainly your venomous legions onward roll:
I laugh, exulting, in my heart's rich ease.
A King unconquerable, my God and Friend,
Has leaped from Heaven, to save me and
defend.

Till chilly dawn and through the long grey day
Your host may storm, aye, through the night once more;
Yet shall I fear you not. You are at bay;
Harmless the angry javelins you pour.
A glorious Captain of eternal power
Will be my stay through every leaguered hour.

And then an hour will come (at dawn or noon
Or dusk, I know not), and the stress will end,
Will end for evermore—that hour is soon—
And I shall know deep joy with Christ my Friend.
King of my heart, dear tender kindly Christ,
Your love is peace and hope, is wealth unpriced.

DIVERS TONGUES

CAN a man go forth in the evening,
When all the air is still
And the world is tense with beauty—
Yet feel no Artist's Will?

And shall a man know the sunset,
All the splendor and the hush—
Yet walk with shoon unloosened,
Blind to the Burning Bush?

And shall a man feel the cool dew
Fall to the sun-split sod,
Nor know, in a flash, that tenderness
Is the heart of the Heart of God?

And shall a man see the mountains
Against an evening sky—
The luminous calm of the mountains—
And be afraid to die?

And then shall he see appearing
The first far evening star,
Nor feel in his soul the tingling peace
That sends God's saints to war?

IN PACE IN IDIPSUM DORMIAM ET REQUIESCAM

LET there be violet dusk and a cool air
Flowing past many petals: let there be talk
Rhythmic and quiet of the wise old men:
And, from a farther place, the fainter voices
Of children at dusk's last game: and all the kind noises
That evening knows: things moving and chirping where
The dim grass deepens: a robin on a green stalk,
Singing sweet complin: leaf-stirrings: a far-off train . . .

Let there be these, half heard through the whispering
Of fragile curtains swaying at windows wide;
And then through the twilight, may my tired prayer bring
God's angel, and the sacramental breath
That blows worn ships down the smooth-flowing tide
Of sleep, our peacefulest sea—save blessed death.

THE LITTLE FLOWER

SOMEONE hath dreamed it, fair the dream
And sad: our sterile race
Yields not a flower so fragrant-pure:
They live who saw her face.

Not in our days, our heavy days,
But in great times remote
Lived God's white saints, lived this His saint:
You wrote the dates she wrote.

And did she know all our common things—
Dull walls and doors? Chill stone?
Cold corridors? Coughing? Rain and wet paths?
Yea, she hath known, hath known.

And sameness of rooms? Food? Stairs to climb?
And praying on wearied knees?
Things lost? Things ugly and mended? Talk?
She was a saint in these.

So she hath gone familiar ways,
Not roads uncouth and wild.
What greatness, then, sees God in her?
The greatness of a child.

Can I then follow? Sweet the way,
If little child can lead—
Or am I weak for even this?
Weakness is all you need.

FANFARON

THE bugle hung by its tasselled cord,
Lost fanfaron! Ghost fanfaron!
And close beside hung the idle sword
And the rust was on its blade;
While the town that was filled with the fat and sweet
Lay asleep like a cat in the noon-day heat,
But a lone heart yearned in the stifling street
For a pealing fanfaronade.

And the flies came out on the evening air,
Dead fanfaron! Fled fanfaron!
And the flesh-pots reeked through the market-square,
Till a man went mad and prayed—
To the rose-dim church he ran and he knelt
Where the spurnèd love of the Eucharist dwelt,
And he begged of the Christ men's hearts to melt
With His own great fanfaronade.

Velvet and warm fell the heavy dark—
"Hist, fanfaron? Faint fanfaron?"
"No: a horse's whinny or watch-dog's bark,"
And again the silence weighed;
And nobody laughed and nobody wept—
They yawned and up to their beds they crept,
But one man muttered and raved as he slept
Of a King's high fanfaronade.

And a wind ran forth at the noon of night,
With fanfaron! Far fanfaron!
Came coolness then and the clear starlight
And notes from a bugle played,
And a noise in the hills as if armies stirred—
The sleepers quivered, awoke and heard—
Grew taut on their beds and, panting, heard
From afar, the fanfaronade.

And into the wakened town at last,
With fanfaron! Grand fanfaron!
Torches flaring on deep ranks massed,
Rode the men of a new Crusade:
Drums a-rattle and drums a-roll,
Flourish of trumpets to quicken your soul,
Pealing of trumpets to madden your soul
With their wild fierce fanfaronade.

Swing the bugle up by its tasselled cord
Join fanfaron! Loud fanfaron!
With fumbling fingers fasten the sword,
Kiss the hilt of the blade—
Kneeling, take the Cross from the priest,
Then leap to the saddle and face for the East
Ere the ranks have passed and the echoes ceased
Of that ringing fanfaronade.

And out from the town at the break of day
Blare fanfaron! Great fanfaron!
The riders went on their dawn-lit way,
Forward to the Crusade!
Battle ahead and a challenge thrown,
The seal of the Cross on their banners flown,
And Magnificat from their bugles blown
In a mighty fanfaronade.

There's a bugle mute on a tasselled cord,
Last fanfaron! Past fanfaron!
There's a dead hand clutching a broken sword,
And a dead face unafraid.
The good fight's fought and the course is run,
The faith was kept and the crown is won
And a soldier was called at the set of sun
To kneel for his accolade.
And far, tonight, beyond foe or fear,
The trumpets of Heaven are his to hear,
Pealing to hail him, the chevalier
Who died in his Lord's Crusade—
Pealing through Heaven, joyous and clear,
In a deathless fanfaronade.

EXILES

DOWN where New York's a-glare at night,
And faces strange and voices hard,
I met a man with dancing eyes—
"I come," says he, "from Oughterard."

Under the bluffs of Iowa,
Missouri's muddy waters flow;
And there I met on a summer's day
A wee, old man from far Mayo.

He sang through San Diego's night—
The sap of shamrocks in his throat—
A lilting piece of an Irish song;
"Oh, I'm," says he, "from Ballymote."

Good folk, who never watched the coast
Of Kerry slip beyond your ken,
God save ye, this Saint Patrick's night,
And us poor wandering Irishmen.

IN A FOREIGN CITY

DRENCHED are the streets with scarlet light,
The pavements burn with evil fire,
The eyes of hell peer through the night,
Sidon hath come again and Tyre.

And can there still be a gentle place
Called Glenasmole, where a songbird thrills
And twilight falls, calm as God's grace,
Over the purple, holy hills?

Dank is the air with foulness here,
The air is racked with hateful din;
And faces flaunt and faces leer
And men go drugged by fumes of sin.

And was it a dream—or have I known
Ben Edar's height over waves and ships,
And clean, clear air to the crags up-blown
With a chant from the sea's white singing lips?

Hell's molten gold hath frothed and spi'
And fallen in foam around this place
Of things unclean, this palace built
For leprous soul and painted face.

Be real, be real to me, memories
Of Senan's cell and an island grave,
And Kevin's cross in a glen of trees
And dreaming stars over Aran-na-Naeve!

THE STAR LOVER

FROM dusk to dawn of bounty
As woke the Israelites,
Out of the long days' meanness
I wake to wondrous nights:

For God hath blessed and broken
His light, to feast mine eyes
With stars He strews in beauty—
White manna of the skies.

FOR A CITY

VISIT, O Lord, the city,
Mansion and street and mart,
For the walls of the city moulder,
And moulders the people's heart.

Thy Truth is told to the people,
Is told but they have not heard,
And he would be strange to the city
Who would take Thy Son at His word.

Thy friends are seen in the city,
But no one can understand;
The monk and the nun and the poor man
Are here in an alien land.

And if Francis rode from Assisi
To be Christ's Fool once more,
They would bid him go from their fine streets
To knock at a madhouse door.

Death is a word unspoken,
We turn our eyes from a tomb,
And life is a cheap piano,
Strummed in a stifling room.

Oh, blameless are we, and pious,
Never a crime is seen—
Safely blameless and pious,
But O! how shallow and mean!

Nor was it the public sinner,
  Whose name would taint the breath,
But the easeful ones, and the blameless,
  That put the Christ to death.

To see Thy wide horizons,
  Who in the city strives?
The sides of a grill-room table
  Are boundaries to our lives.

O, visit, great God, the city—
  Come with Thy flaming host,
In thunder and splendid tempest,
  In the winds of Pentecost,

So, hearing Thy Voice majestic,
  The people may turn to Thee,
And, purged by Thy awful lightnings,
  Their eyes at last may see.

GOD WILLS IT

FROM the throats of men of old it comes,
Dieu le veut!
With the rattle of steel and beat of drums,
Dieu le veut!
The thunderous shout of a knightly host,
Who sword for sword with Saracen crossed,
And made of themselves God's holocaust—
"God wills it,"
Dieu le veut!

Counts of Lorraine and Normandie,
Dieu le veut!
Vassal and prince and peasantry,
Dieu le veut!
Villagers poor and Kings of France
Mustered for Christ with sword and lance,
And sang as they swept to the great advance:
"God wills it,"
Dieu le veut!

Then Europe blazed with a high desire,
Dieu le veut!
While Bernard scattered his words of fire,
Dieu le veut!

And the hearts of men were caught by the flame
Of the love of Christ, and they gladly came
To die at the walls of Jerusalem.
"God wills it,"
Dieu le veut!

Oh, He lives, He lives, for He changes never,
Dieu le veut!
The Christ, Who is glorious God for ever,
Dieu le veut!
The Christ, the Christ, Whom they served of old,
The Christ, Whose spell is a thing untold—
Oh, shall we our quivering blades withhold?
"God wills it,"
Dieu le veut!

So rally and come with the deathless cry,
Dieu le veut!
Sung of Christ's ancient chivalry,
Dieu le veut!
It's only a day of strife and guard—
The trumpet then, and the rich reward,
The trumpet and God's great reward—
Then forward!
DIEU LE VEUT!

STORM

OUT, out into the wild night, wild soul!
Aye, meet the winds and know their strength: be tossed
And blown and buffeted, that so the storm
That vexes thy small self may soon be lost,
Merged in the greater tempest. Out, out and feel
The might that stirs abroad; mark the wide skies,
The hurtled clouds in flight, the far-off stars—
To these great things of God turn thy tired eyes.

Out, out and find thy rest!
With ears attuned while, in full spacious hymn
The organ brave of hurricane peals forth;
Deep sounding in yon wood, cathedral dim,
Treble among the stars in places high,
Where pipes the piercing whistle of the wind.
Listen elate to all this music fierce,
And in the symphony thy soothing find.

This be the easing of thy stress—
In the wide theatre of the universe
To see the tempest-drama God has set
A-playing, and to hear the thunderous verse
Uttered by these, wild cosmic powers that sway
In passionate conflict. Open thy troubled heart
To cleansing awe, and gain the boon of peace
From this tremendous showing of God's art.

THE VESTMENT-MAKER

LINEN spun and poplin stuff,
Weft of weavers old,
Shining thread and twining thread,
And Flemish cloth of gold.

Purest alb and chasuble,
All are for the priest,
Cincture, stole and maniple,
At the King's White Feast.

Red is for a martyr's day,
Who, with joyous breath,
From the Chieftain's Chalice drank
Rich ripe wine of death.

White is for Confessors all,
Chevaliers of God,
Monks and kings and beggar men:
And white for womanhood.

Virgin white for Heaven's Queen,
Gentle and kind of face,
Never a stain was on her soul,
Mary, full of grace.

And white for Christ's high festivals,
Splendor undimmed to show,
For when He stood on Thabor's mount,
His garments shone as snow.

And green is for the Triune Lord,
After Paschal days,
Green of the trees and windy hills
That tell their Maker's praise.

Then, in days of solemn hush,
Violet is worn,
While the plaintive earth awaits
Christmas or Easter morn.

Linen spun and poplin stuff,
Weft of weavers old,
Shining thread and twining thread,
And Flemish cloth of gold.

Alb and stole and chasuble,
Make I for the priest,
To wear with fringed maniple
At the Altar-Feast.

Hallowed ones whose days he keeps,
Hearken to his call;
And Mary bless my needle poor,
And Christ save us all.

HIS COMING

THE days that lead to Christmas
Are dark days and wild,
For all the world is restless,
And craving for the Child.

Deep in the murky city
The lamps are lit at noon,
And over the sodden countryside
The night falls soon.

But when His time is nearing,
Lo! the wide sky grows clear,
And the great night of Christmas
Is the fairest of the year.

Light streams from the heavens,
Drenching the world with peace,
And the only cloud that lingers
Is a Lamb's soft fleece.

And a star hangs in splendor
Over a herdsman's shed,
Where the world's hope is living
And the world's woe is dead.

And all our common highways
By glimmering feet are trod,
While down the sky's star-dusty roads
Ride singing hosts of God.

Born unto men a Saviour!
Pity and peace He brings,
Fullness of grace for lonely hearts
Of shepherds and of kings!

INTROIBO

TOMORROW unto me the High Adventure,
Tomorrow unto me the White Romance—
The fair, the fine, the hallowed High Adventure,
Fairer than fell to all the knights of France

What time they rode, their silken banners under,
On cloth of gold that hid the summer's grass:
To me unfolds a plain of richer wonder
In the white cloth spread glistening for the Mass.

I touch, I clasp, I raise the Christ most regal;
For Heaven's high courts I leave the earth's poor sod:
Spaces I climb that mock the wide-winged eagle,
I pass the blazing stars to meet my God.

Vested in hallowed robes of rare tradition,
I shall bow down before the Host of Praise,
Speaking the Loveliest Thing in priestly mission,
Doing the Loveliest Deed by one tense phrase.

More than earth's wine these tremulous lips will redden,
Greater than bread within these hands will break;
In sweetness no sad satiety can deaden,
Grandly I shall fulfill Melchisedech.

"Should not the sinful lips and fingers falter?"
But God is richly tender, deep in ruth;
So I shall go by white light to the Altar
Of Him Who fills with joy my passionate youth.

Too exquisite tonight my hope and yearning,
How can I yield to sleep's forgetful trance?
The High Adventure comes with day returning,
Comes, with tomorrow's dawn, the White
Romance!

THE LIGHTS OF DUBLIN

NOW all the lights of Dublin
Are many and many a kind:
There's candle-light and carriage-light,
And torches in the wind;
Lights in the Coombe's high windows,
Glimmering lights on the Green—
By me, far flown from Dublin,
Through many a dusk they're seen.

Now all the lights of Dublin
Are friendly lights and fair:
They are haloed round with wisdom
When they dream in an olden square;
Mirthful on rain-wet pavements,
They can turn the gloom to gilt
When tatters and rags go dancing
To an old street-organ's lilt.

But the lights of the faith of Dublin
Are lights that will haunt the eye:
The lamp, lit dim where they kneel to Him
Whose Heart to their heart is nigh;
And the glory of Benediction
When the blazing altars shine;
And above the street the flicker
Of a tenement-dweller's shrine.

Now all the lights of Dublin
In beauty shall endure,
While they take their flame from the altars
And the glowing breasts of the poor;
Fine and far be their gleaming
That all the world may mark
God's grace in the lights of Dublin
Streaming across the dark.

And all the lights of Dublin
Are many and many a kind:
There's candle-light and carriage-light,
And torches in the wind;
Lights in the Coombe's high windows,
Glimmering lights on the Green—
By me, far flown from Dublin,
Through many a dusk they're seen.

ET EXALTAVIT HUMILES
(St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus)

OVER the tiny hidden things
The tall trees tower,
And their braggart arms are thick and gnarled
With the muscle-knots of power;
But their pride is gone since at dusk they heard
Magnificat from our Lord's red bird,
Who sang how the world is shaken and stirred
By a little white flower.

Over the clouds' torn barricades
The storm winds race,
And many a tall and lordly tree
Is riven from its place:
And, after it all, on the cumbered ground,
Amid pines laid low and oaks discrowned,
A flower alone left living is found—
A flower as white as grace.

God walked as of old in His garden,
At the evening hour:
And for love He would gather a tiny thing,
To deck with a starry dower:
He chose, and raised up for the world to see—
Ah, fair in its strong sweet frailty—
Full in the sun of His majesty,
And set in Our Lady's bower,
Taller for ever than any tree—
A little white flower.

MEXICO, 1926

YOU may speak of Christ to the savage, you may raise the Cross on his land,
To the Yukon go, to the Ganges go, but halt at the Rio Grande!
The Mongol will never molest you, you are safe with the dark Malay;
But bring Christ's Sign to the Mexican line and a gentleman bars your way.

You may build a hut in the jungle and kneel at your altar there,
And a barbarous chief will thank you for teaching the ways of prayer;
But speak of their God to the children in Our Lady's land of the South,
And a highly civilized señor will show you his pistol's mouth.

No Indian rajah jails you if he sees you with stole and pyx;
You will find no Dyak head-hunters thieving your crucifix;
The convert Redskin's honor is free of the robber's smirch—
It takes a civilized señor to strip the walls of a church.

Ay, sometimes the heathen's sword-blade has martyred the priest and the nun;
In a raw and ignorant frenzy the puerile thing was done;
But this is no band of Zulus that down on the orphanage swoops—
'Tis a highly civilized señor with his highly chivalrous troops.

You may speak in Mexico City in the name of Lenin the Man,
You may speak in the name of Mammon, you may speak in the name of Pan,
You may speak in the name that is legion, you may speak in the name of hell
And you're safe. But speak in the Name of Christ—there's a different tale to tell.

The teaching that tamed the Vandal, the spirit that chastened the Goth,
The wisdom that gave us Christendom, sole check on man's lust and wrath,
You may spread it in cave or igloo, but not in your Mexican school—
It displeases a civilized señor and it's banned by his civilized rule.

"I must follow the laws of the nation," he says, and so echoes the cry
Of the deicide rabble: "We have a law, and by that law let Christ die!"
So the minions of Nero were righteous? And Robespierre's ethics unflawed?
"Give unto Caesar," your Gospel runs, "the things of both Caesar and God."

He scoffs at the "stuttering sacristans"; he mocks the "grimacing friars".
Ah, señor, America smiles not. Have you not known that our sires
Saw heroes in Carroll and Serra, in Gallitzin, Jogues and Brebeuf?
You have sneered at the padre and black-robe. Droll señor, that is enough. . .

And the gentle women you harass—we know them and know their works.
Do you hate them for serving, fearless, where the deadly fever lurks?
Do you hate them for shielding the orphan, for keeping the child's soul white?
Is your warfare waged against them for this, O most doughty knight?

To Christ in His living members, Good Friday comes anew.
To be honored thus by the world's dark hate is proof of their lineage true.
The spittle is flung on the kingly Face, the thorns pressed down on the Brow,
And Our Lady of Guadalupe mourns—she is Mother of Sorrows now.

You may speak Christ's Name to the savage, you may raise the Cross on his land,
To the Ganges go, to the Yukon go—but halt at the Rio Grande!
Eat bread and salt with the tribesman—he will honor and guard his guest;
But break God's Bread for peon unfed—there's a señor's gun at your breast!

CREDIDI, PROPTER QUOD LOCUTUS SUM

I HAVE hoped against hope,
I have prayed against fact,
I have fought against fear,
Remembering Your pact.

In the ink of Your Blood
The promise still stands,
In the print of the nails
On Your Feet and Your Hands.

With the Host that I clasp,
With the Chalice I take,
I plead by a testament
Time cannot break.

By Your Name, by Your word,
By our bond that You met,
By the sign You have shown us,
You shall not forget.

Giving crib, giving Cross,
Giving altar and shrift,
Giving Mary for mother—
You will bar not this gift.

From the feast of Your might
  Let it fall as a crumb;
My eyes on my Master,
  Lo, whelp-like, I come.

I trust, yet I trust not—
  I do believe;
Lord, help my unbelief,
  Let me receive.

I ask not to see it,
  But still, with eyes veiled,
I shall vow in my darkness
  That dawn has not failed.

Yea, more: I now set
  In Your Heart for me riven,
With my plea for this gift,
  My thanks for it given.

SINNER'S RETURN

UPON my throbbing forehead His cool hand lies,
His deep sleeve's shadow shielding my burning eyes.

My heavy head supporting, His bosom to my ear
Gives me the tireless heartbeats of His love to hear.

My breath that came so sharply, panting in unrest,
Quietens to the soft rise and cadence of His breast.

My hand clenched in anguish, the hand that tried to clutch. . .
Yielding, relaxes to a wounded Hand's touch.

Pressed to my lips gently, my lips parted and dry,
Is the curved rim of His chalice, that I may drink—even I.

But what will His words be? As a flood my fears return.
Has a false trust lulled me? What if His lips be stern!

Suspense—despair—torture! Let me fly! I am defiled.
And then His words come—only these:
"Poor child! Poor child!"

KNIGHTS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

AS I go down some clanging, clouded street,
In the grey sullen place of worldly cares,
How I am stirred when suddenly I meet
One in the crowd who for an emblem wears
A tiny gilded cross: a boyish clerk
Whistling his pleasure while the city roars,
An old street-sweeper endlessly at work,
Or keen-faced youth swinging through office doors.

How the sign gladdens! Gone is the leaden gloom;
I seem to glimpse the white sweet Eucharist,
And, heedless of throng and tumult, I pass on
Breathing the rare air of the Upper Room,
Marveling at this—that there be knights of Christ
Signed of His seal in very Babylon.

THE GLAD DAYS

THE Lord of plenteous mercy
With throbbing heart I praise
For all the sunlit gladness
Of these ripe-fruited days.

When life was a tender lyric,
Set to a haunting tune,
And the hours danced by, to the measure
Of the old-world rigadoon.

When the bow of God passed, quivering,
Over the chords within,
Till all my heart was vibrant
Like a rich violin.

And prayer was a poem at morning,
A poem, too, at noon,
And my soul sang a glad complin
At the rising of the moon.

So for these hours of gladness
I lift my voice in praise,
And I shall store their memory
Against the darksome days.

Then, through the gloom and rain-mist,
To thought of these I'll grope,
To find a stronger courage,
And wait for Heaven in hope.

SPRING HAS COME IN CONNACHT

SPRING has come in Connacht,
Where the white thorn blows,
Spring with merry cowslip
And the fair primrose;
And my heart is yearning, yearning,
For far away am I—
(Do you hear the lark a-singing
To the red dawn-sky?)

I would I were in Connacht
And I'd see my home once more,
And the stony boreen winding
To the wee half-door;
And I'd walk the windy mountain
And the long, lone shore—
(Do you hear the sea-gull crying
Through the far waves' roar?)

And I'd see brown boats from Arran
Scudding swift down Galway Bay,
And I'd sit before my turf-fire
At the closing of the day;
But I'll never be in Connacht,
Save in my dreams at night—
(Whom is the throstle calling
Through the long twilight?)

A SOLDIER OF SARSFIELD

HALF-A-SCORE horses went over the hill
With a ring, a swing and a gallop,
And my ears seem to throb with the echoes still,
With the ring, the swing and the gallop;
And the swift, keen glance of the riders told
That their errand was brave and their errand was bold;
It makes the heart beat in a soldier old
With a ring, a swing and a gallop.

There's a message I know in those quick-thudding feet,
In the ring, the swing and the gallop:
"Old friends to succor, old foes to meet
With a ring, a swing and a gallop!"
For I heard it said last night in the glen
That Munster is full of King William's men—
I've a mind to go riding with Sarsfield again
With a ring, a swing and a gallop.

There'll be fighting at Limerick town, you say?
(Ah, the ring, the swing and the gallop!)
Then it's time all Sarsfield's men were away
With a ring, a swing and a gallop;
So fetch me my saddle and give me the steel
That my father wore when he rode with O'Neill,
And a plume for my hat and a spur for my heel,
Then—the ring, the swing and the gallop!

Christ be my star as I hasten tonight,
With a ring, a swing and a gallop!
And what if tomorrow I fall in the fight,
With a ring, a swing and a gallop!
Men can but say with a quickened breath
"Like a Gael and a soldier he went to his death,
Like a soldier of Sarsfield he rode to his death—
With a ring, a swing and a gallop!"

THE ENDURING OF CHRISTMAS

WHILE I go down to changeful days
Through the long almanack,
To one time and one place
I love to wander back.

For surely when each poor shepherd
Went to his fold apart,
The Tidings lingered in his ears
And the Christ-thought in his heart.

And whithersoever the Wise Men went,
By barren ways and wild,
They kept the memory of the Star
And the vision of the Child.

So, elsewhere though my feet may go,
I love the stable bare,
Warm with God's love; the shuddering soul
Might dwell forever there.

Noël be deathless in my heart,
Its glamors never pass!
For every day is Christmas Day
At the altar of the Mass.

And when within a chancel glows
A point of ruby flame,
I know it for the self-same star
That leads to Bethlehem.

Ah, who can tell the countless ways
Of Christ's re-birth for men?
Though we be fools ten thousand times,
He comes to save again.

No moment but His kindly light
Streams on our darkened eyes
And the great song of peace rings down
From radiant Christmas skies.

THE HOUSE OF REFUGE

GRATEFUL to me the hush of little chapels,
Friendly to me the sanctuary's light;
Sore hearts are healed here, sad eyes are gladdened,
Here where a Lamp sheds blessing through the night.

Here there is peace found, kneeling in the shadows;
Soiled heart to sinless Heart hither comes to speak.
Restful to me the long white rail of marble,
Cool to me fevered, strong to me weak.

Here there is shelter, shelter from the turmoil,
Here there is refuge from the frantic street;
Here through the ruby gloom comes no strident tumult,
Here the soul's repose is, deep and long and sweet.

Nor is it yet the lamplight, nor yet the brooding silence,
Nor cold marble whiteness that soothes the wearied mind;
These the passing tokens of the truth undying—
Naught would the shrine be, without the Gift enshrined.

For One waits here, within the Altar's gloaming—
The pierced Heart of Calvary, open to the end;
And though I were an outlaw, though the world disowned me,
Still would He welcome me and bid me call Him "Friend".

Because He is here, I stay to feel His vestments,
Because He is listening, I linger loth to move;
Cloudlike around me is the marvel of His Presence,
And my eyes close slowly, blinded by His love.

PETALS

A WHITE petal and a red petal
Beside my couch I keep
So all my dreams be beautiful
When I am veiled in sleep.

The red petal of the Chalice-thought,
The white thought of the Host—
I care not what the night may take,
So these be never lost.

With white petal and red petal
Is a fair leaf of gold,
Gold for the cup and paten round,
Of metal pure and old.

Unto the hallowed fragrances
I turn my pillowed head
And I am breathing loveliness
Until the night is sped.

Then in the tingling dawn I run,
Joyous through dew-cool grass
To gather new roses, white and red,
In the garden of the Mass.

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